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Please amend the following claims:

Sub D
Claim 1 (Amended) A cellulose acetate obtained by the reaction of a cellulose, which may contain a hemicellulose, with acetic anhydride in the presence of a sulfuric acid catalyst and having at least one feature selected from the group consisting of [the following features (i), (ii) and (iii)]:

(i) said cellulose acetate has carboxyl groups wherein at least part of the carboxyl groups are free carboxyl groups [a part of carboxyl groups binding to at least one member selected from the group consisting of a cellulose acetate and a hemicellulose acetate are in an acidic form];

Q
(ii) said cellulose acetate contains at least one member selected from the group consisting of an acid having an acid dissociation exponent pKa of 1.93 to 4.50 in water, an alkali metal salt of said acid and an alkaline earth metal salt of said acid [is contained]; and

(iii) said cellulose acetate contains an alkali metal or an alkaline earth metal [is contained], wherein the total content of [an] the [alkaline] alkali metal and [an] the alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of the cellulose acetate is [from an effective amount to] 5.5×10^{-6} equivalent or less [(in terms of ion equivalent)].

Subt
Eq

Claim 2 (Amended) A cellulose acetate according to Claim 1, wherein the total content of [an] the [alkaline] alkali metal and [an] the alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of the cellulose acetate is [from an effective amount to] 2.5×10^{-6} equivalent or less [(in terms of ion equivalent)].

Claim 3 (Amended) A cellulose acetate according to Claim 1, wherein the total content of [an] the [alkaline] alkali metal and [an] the alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of the cellulose acetate is [from an effective amount to] 1×10^{-6} equivalent or less [(in terms of ion equivalent)].

Claim 4 (Amended) A cellulose acetate according to Claim 1, wherein the acid has a pKa value of [said acid is] 2.0 to 4.4.

a²
cont'd

Claim 5 (Amended) A cellulose acetate according to Claim[s] 1, wherein the acid is at least one organic acid selected from the group consisting of an aliphatic monocarboxylic acid, an aliphatic polycarboxylic acid, a hydroxycarboxylic acid and an amino acid [or derivatives thereof].

Claim 6 (Amended) A cellulose acetate according to Claim 1, wherein the acid is at least one organic acid selected from the group consisting of a saturated or unsaturated C₁₋₃ monocarboxylic acid, a saturated or unsaturated C₂₋₄ dicarboxylic acid, a C₁₋₆ hydroxycarboxylic acid and an amino acid.

Claim 7 (Amended) A cellulose acetate according to Claim 1, wherein the acid is at least one member selected from the group consisting of formic acid, haloacetic acid, halopropionic acid, acrylic acid, malonic acid, succinic acid, glutaric acid, fumaric acid, glycolic acid, lactic acid, malic acid, tartaric acid and citric acid.

Claim 8 (Amended) A cellulose acetate according to Claim 1, wherein the total content of the acid, [and] the alkali metal salt of the acid and the alkaline earth metal salt of the acid [thereof] is 1×10^{-3} to 3×10^{-5} mole relative to 1 gram of the cellulose acetate.

Claim 9 (Amended) A cellulose acetate according to Claim 1, wherein the total content of the acid, [and] the alkali metal salt of the acid and the alkaline earth metal salt of the acid [thereof] is 1×10^{-8} to 2×10^{-5} mole relative to 1 gram of the cellulose acetate.

Claim 10 (Amended) A cellulose acetate according to Claim 1, wherein the total content of the acid, [and] the alkali metal salt of the acid and the alkaline earth metal salt of the acid [thereof] is 1×10^{-7} to 1×10^{-5} mole relative to 1 gram of the cellulose acetate.

Subt G10
~~Claim 11 (Amended) A cellulose acetate according to Claim 1,
[which has] wherein the cellulose acetate is in the form of a
slurry, and wherein the slurry has a pH of 4.5 to 5.5.~~

Subt E3
A2
concl'd
Subt G11
~~Claim 12 (Amended) A cellulose acetate according to Claim 1,
[which has] wherein the cellulose acetate is in the form of a
slurry, and wherein the slurry has a pH of 4.8 to 6.0.~~

~~Claim 13 (Amended) A cellulose acetate according to Claim 1,
[which has] wherein the average degree of acetylation [of] is from
43.7 to 62.5%.~~

Subt G6
~~Claim 15 (Amended) A cellulose acetate according to Claim 1,
wherein [a] the cellulose as a raw material is at least one
selected from the group consisting of a wood pulp and a linter
pulp.~~

Subt G7
~~Claim 16 (Amended) A cellulose acetate according to Claim 1,
wherein [a] the cellulose as a raw material is at least one
selected from the group consisting of a hardwood pulp and a
softwood pulp.~~

Claim 17 (Amended)

Line 2, change "comprising" to --comprises--

Line 7, change "acid" to --salt--

Line 12, delete "from an effective amount to" and after
"equivalent" insert --or less--

Line 13, delete "("; and delete ")"

Sub E6
A4
Claim 19 (Amended) A dope containing (a) a cellulose acetate and (b) at least one member selected from the group consisting of [a] an acid having an acid dissociation exponent pKa of 1.93 to 4.50 in water, an [alkaline] alkali metal salt of the acid and an alkaline earth metal salt of the acid.

Claim 20 (Amended) A method for improving the releasability of a film from a support [or spinnability with using] which comprises casting the dope according to Claim 18 or 19 on the support.

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Please add the following new claim:

Sub E7
A5
Sub G9
~~--21. A method for improving spinnability which comprises spinning the dope according to Claim 18 or 19.~~

~~22. A method of producing a cellulose acetate according to Claim 17, which comprises treating a cellulose with acetic acid, acetylating with acetic anhydride in the presence of a sulfuric acid catalyst to produce a cellulose triacetate, and hydrolyzing or aging the cellulose triacetate using sulfuric acid as a catalyst.--~~